

REMARKS

Claims 1-5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over the combined teachings of U.S. 5,604,006 (Ponchaud et al.) in view of U.S. 4,781,952 (Coscia et al.)

The Examiner contends that Ponchaud teaches all of the elements of the recited claims except the use of an adhesive element on the backing member on a surface opposite a surface upon which the main plate is mounted.

It is respectfully submitted that the Examiner has erroneously interpreted Ponchaud or has erroneously interpreted the claims under consideration.

Primarily, the Examiner has entirely overlooked the fact that claim 1 specifically recites a main plate having at least one opening therein and at least one decorative insert plate snugly disposed within a boundary of the opening, with the main plate and the insert plate mounted on a backing member.

Obviously, Ponchaud does not show an opening of any kind on the main thermoplastic substrate, but only shows a recess on a top surface in which a label is mounted. Since the label is mounted on the surface of the plastic substrate, it is impossible for the label to be mounted on a backing attached to the opposite side of the substrate.

On the contrary, the present invention, as claimed in claim 1, consistent with the description on page 1, paragraph 0003, last sentence: "The main plate and the insert plate are mounted on a backing member for attachment of the overlay trim member in place...", involves an insert plate mounted to a backing member through an opening in the main plate, that is also mounted on a backing member.

Accordingly the main reference Ponchaud relied on by the Examiner lacks an essential element of claim 1 and the remaining claims, namely an opening in which an insert plate is mounted and further wherein both the main plate and the insert plate are attached to a backing member.

This necessarily requires that the opening in the main plate extend completely through the main plate to enable the backing member to receive the insert plate. The Examiner has completely failed to address this limitation in the claims and it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103 is improper as failing to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness.

By way of additional background, it should be noted that the decorative insert plate mounted within an opening extending completely through the main plate wherein both the main plate and the decorative plate are mounted on a backing member provides several advantages to the manufacturer, the installer and the customer.

For example, with such a product, the manufacturer may offer a range of assemblies of main plates and backing members with numerous openings pre-cut in the main plate of various sizes and dimensions and various insert plates having different surface appearances, textures, materials, etc. mountable directly within the opening(s) in the main member.

Thus, a very large selection is enabled due to the combination of basic main plates and various insert members having different shapes, textures, decorative surfaces, logos, etc. to an installer or purchaser.

At the installation level, the installer may offer a customer a great number of combinations of main plates area, insert plates, and backing members to provide unique and distinctive appearances. After the installer has mounted the main plate to a backing member, a selected insert plate is likewise mounted to the backing member in the opening pre-cut in the main plate. The integrated structure thus assumes a very unitary appearance as opposed to a surface label or the like mounted on the surface of the main plate. The structural integrity of the assembly is further ensured because both the main plate and the insert are securely mounted to the backing member.

It is respectfully submitted that the Examiner has failed to establish a basis for rejecting the claims on the basis of the cited prior art in view of the fact that none of the documents disclose or remotely suggest an opening in a main plate wherein the

main plate is mounted to a backing member and an insert plate is likewise also mounted on the same backing member upon insertion of the insert plate into the opening in the main plate.

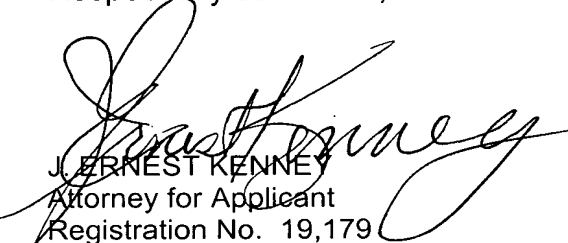
It is respectfully submitted that withdrawal of the rejection of the claims is warranted and the same is respectfully requested.

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Date: October 4, 2004

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Respectfully submitted,


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